

# the GIFT of the MOGWAI

GREMLINS 

STORY 1





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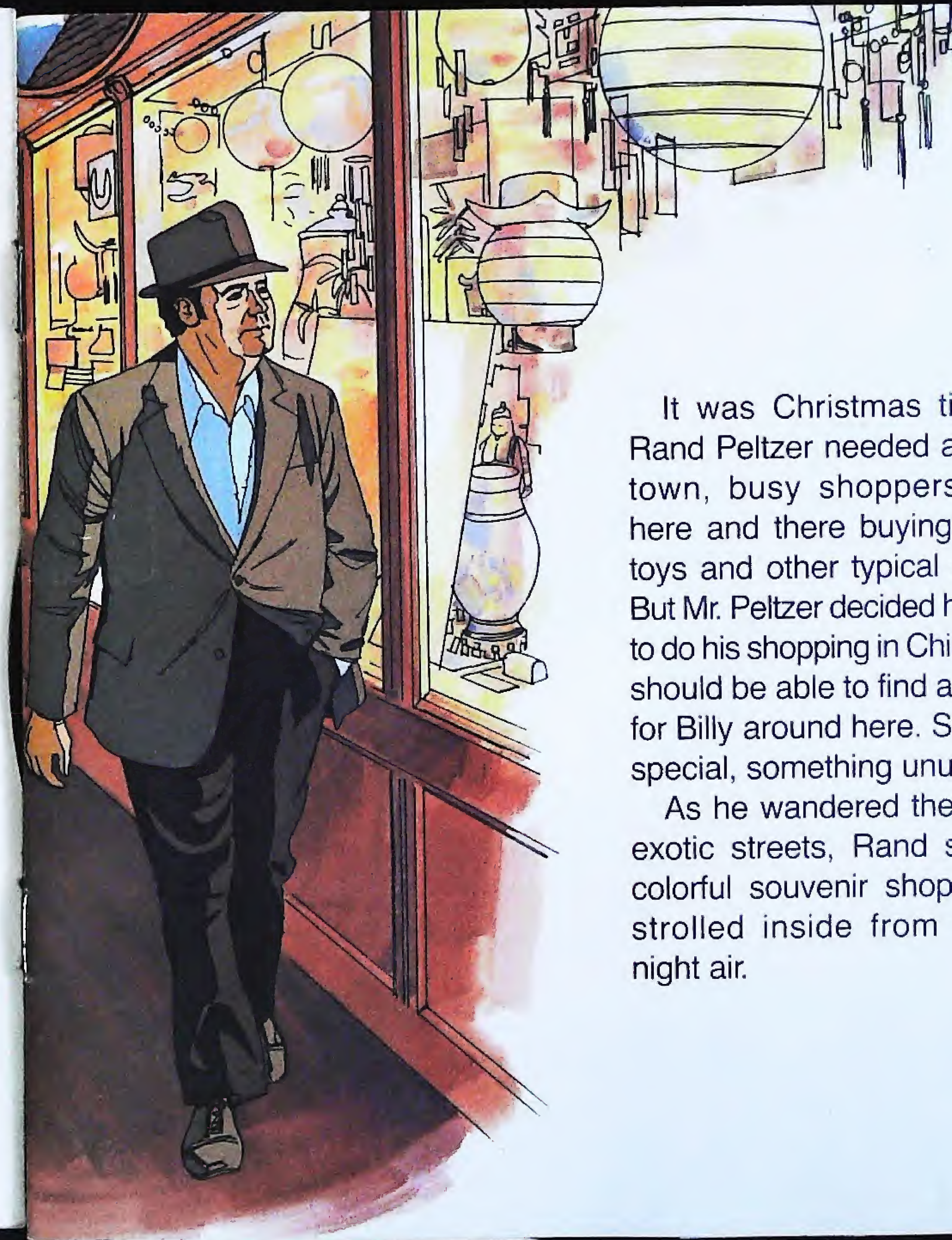
Story 1



This is the story of The Gift of the Mogwai. You can read along with me in your book. You will know it is time to turn the page when you hear the chimes ring like this...

**Let's begin now:**

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It was Christmas time, and Rand Peltzer needed a gift. Uptown, busy shoppers rushed here and there buying ties and toys and other typical presents. But Mr. Peltzer decided he wanted to do his shopping in Chinatown. "I should be able to find a great gift for Billy around here. Something special, something unusual."

As he wandered the bustling, exotic streets, Rand spotted a colorful souvenir shop, and he strolled inside from the cold night air.





Rand stepped up to the lady at the counter. "I'm looking for something interesting to give my son."

The saleswoman nodded and began showing Rand everything from transistor radios to painted fans. Rand shook his head. "No, you see I want something different, something unique, something he can't get at home."

Just then a small hand reached up and tugged Rand's sleeve. "Hey, Mister. You want something different? I know a place full of different things."

Rand glanced down to see a skinny Oriental boy wearing an old T-shirt and a faded baseball cap. "Sorry, kid. I'm not looking for baseball cards."

The boy reached into his pocket. "Does this look like a baseball card?" He pulled out an ugly, shrunken head.

Rand jumped back. "Is that real?"

"Everything's real at Grandfather's shop. It's not like any other shop in Chinatown. Follow me."

Rand hesitated a moment, and then walked out into the chilly night. "This I gotta see."





The boy led Rand through a maze of smoky, narrow alleyways and down wet cobblestone streets to a curio shop on a deadend street. A gust of wind whistled down the alley as Rand stepped under a creaking wooden sign and through the dirty, flimsy door.

The store looked like a wizard's workshop. It was crowded with musty books and dusty bottles and jars. Behind the counter stood a very old Chinese man smoking a pipe. The boy introduced him. "This is my grandfather. Go on, mister. Look around. See if there's something you like." Rand bought a candy bar and began to inspect the bizarre items. The boy joined his grandfather in a game of chess. "What are you doing in this part of town, mister?"

"Oh, business. I make things. I come up with ideas for new 'gizmos,' you know, inventions."

The boy nudged his grandfather. "Thomas Edison." The old man broke into a smile. "Thomas Edison. Hee, hee, hee!"

Rand grinned in embarrassment. Then a strange, high-pitched giggle joined the laughter. Rand froze. "What was that?"

But the boy and his grandfather just went back to their game. The giggle rang out again. Rand followed the sound to a back corner of the shop.





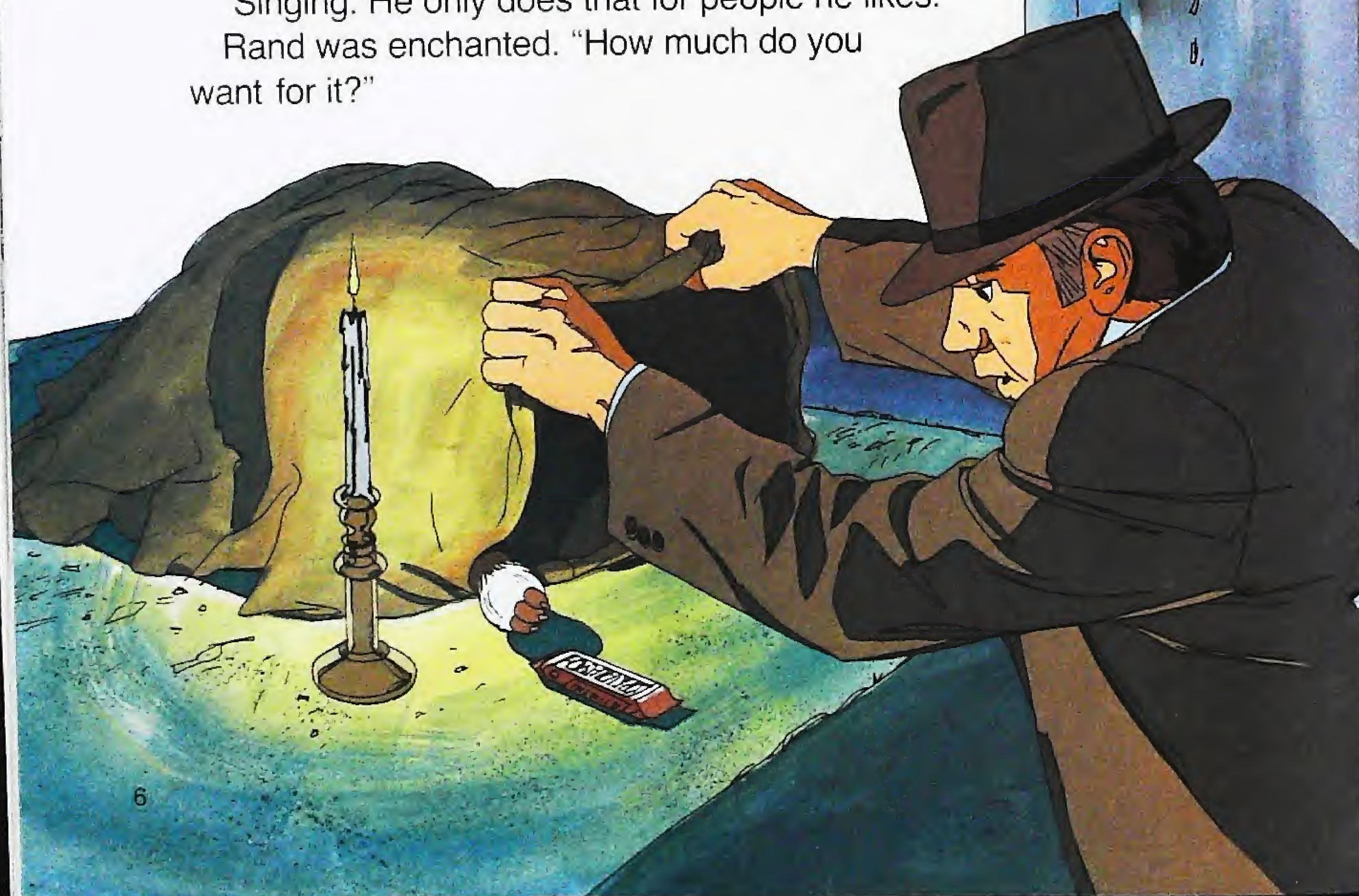
Hidden on a shelf, under a burlap cloth, he found a small cage. Rand set his candy bar down and reached out to lift the covering. Suddenly, a little furry hand came out of the cage and grabbed his candy bar. Rand peered inside and saw a tiny, cuddly animal. "What is this? I've never seen anything like it."

The Chinese boy answered. "Mogwai."

"What's he doing?"

"Singing. He only does that for people he likes."

Rand was enchanted. "How much do you want for it?"



The old man shook his head. "Mogwai not for sale."

"Aw, come on. My son, Billy, would love it. Here. One hundred bucks. Cash." The old man didn't flinch. "Okay. One hundred and fifty." The shopowner shook his head again. "Here, you can have every penny I've got on me. Two hundred and sixty dollars."

The boy's eyes lit up, but his grandfather was firm. "Mogwai is not like other animal. He is very special creature. With Mogwai comes much responsibility. I cannot sell him at any price." Then the old man turned and walked into the back room.



Rand left the shop and headed back, disappointed. But the owner's grandson ran up to him in the alley carrying a wooden box. "Forget what my grandfather said. We need the money. Here, you can have the Mogwai. But there are some rules you've got to follow. First, keep him away from light. He hates bright light—especially sunlight, it'll kill him. Next don't get him wet. Keep him away from water."



Rand grinned. "I guess a day at the beach is out of the question."

"I'm serious, mister. But the most important thing—the thing you can never forget, no matter how much he cries and begs, never—*never* feed him after midnight. You got it?"

"Got it. I promise. No bright light, no water and no food after midnight."

"Don't forget, mister." The boy ran back inside with Rand's money leaving Rand very pleased with his successful search.



Meanwhile, in the small town of Kingston Falls, Billy Peltzer was returning home from his day of work. He greeted his mother in the kitchen. "What a rotten day at the bank, Mom."

"Well, never mind that now, Billy. Your father will be home from his trip any minute."

Sure enough, before long, the front door flew open. "Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas." Rand handed Billy the present. "I want you to open it now. This can't wait until Christmas morning."

Billy tore off the wrappings and lifted the lid. A tiny ball of fur peeked out of the box with large, friendly eyes. Billy grinned with delight. "What is it, Dad?"

"The owners called it a Mogwai. You can train him to do anything, and he's really clever. He figured out how to work most of my gizmos all by himself."

"Well, since he likes gizmos so much, let's call him 'Gizmo'."

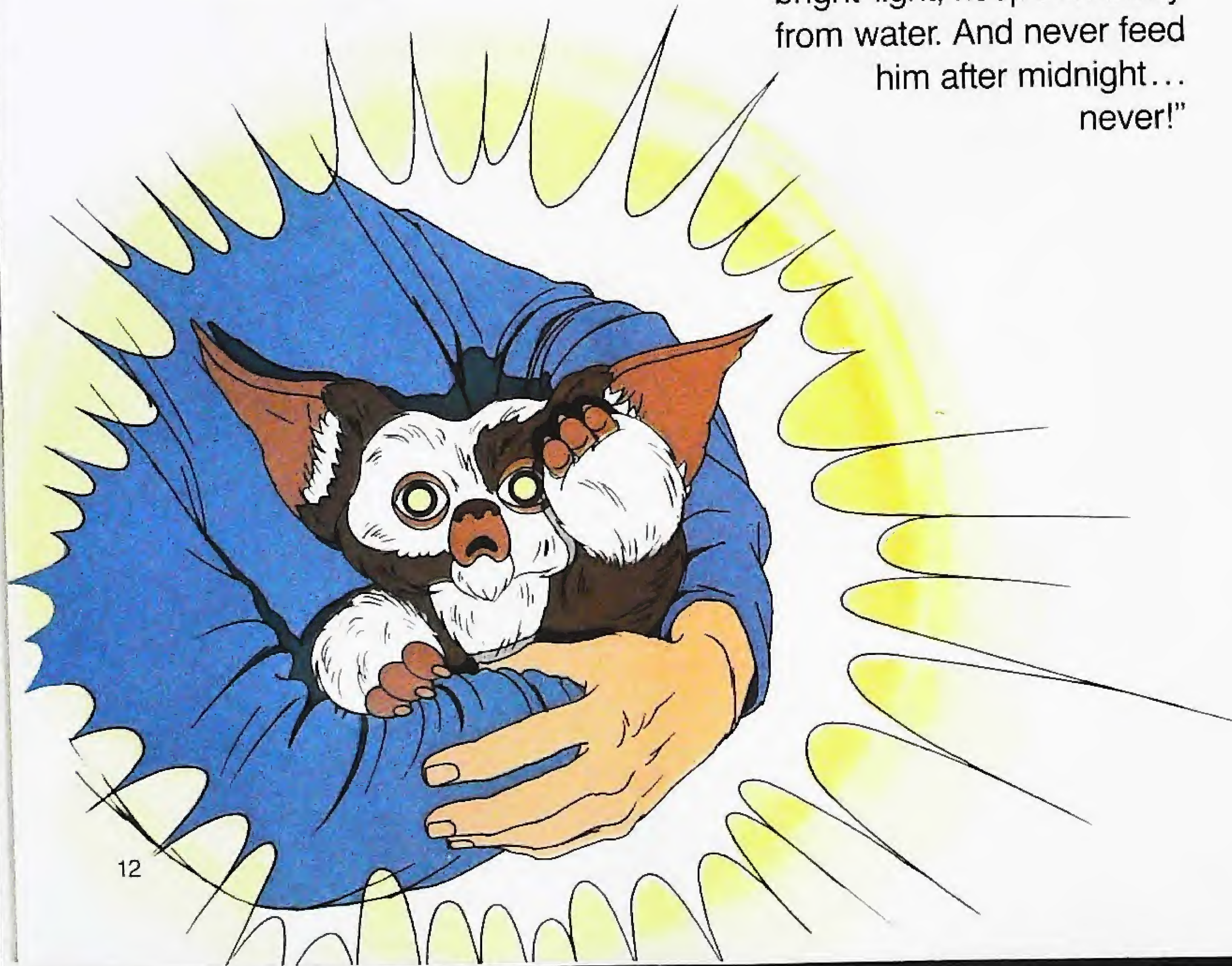




Billy's mom watched Gizmo crawl out of the box, climb onto Billy's shoulder and lick his cheek. "This is so cute. I've got to get a picture. Okay—smile." The bulb flashed, and Gizmo screamed in fright.

Billy cuddled the trembling Mogwai. "Dad, what happened?"

"The little fella's scared. He hates bright lights. See, there are certain things you have to remember about this guy, Billy. Besides bright light, keep him away from water. And never feed him after midnight... never!"



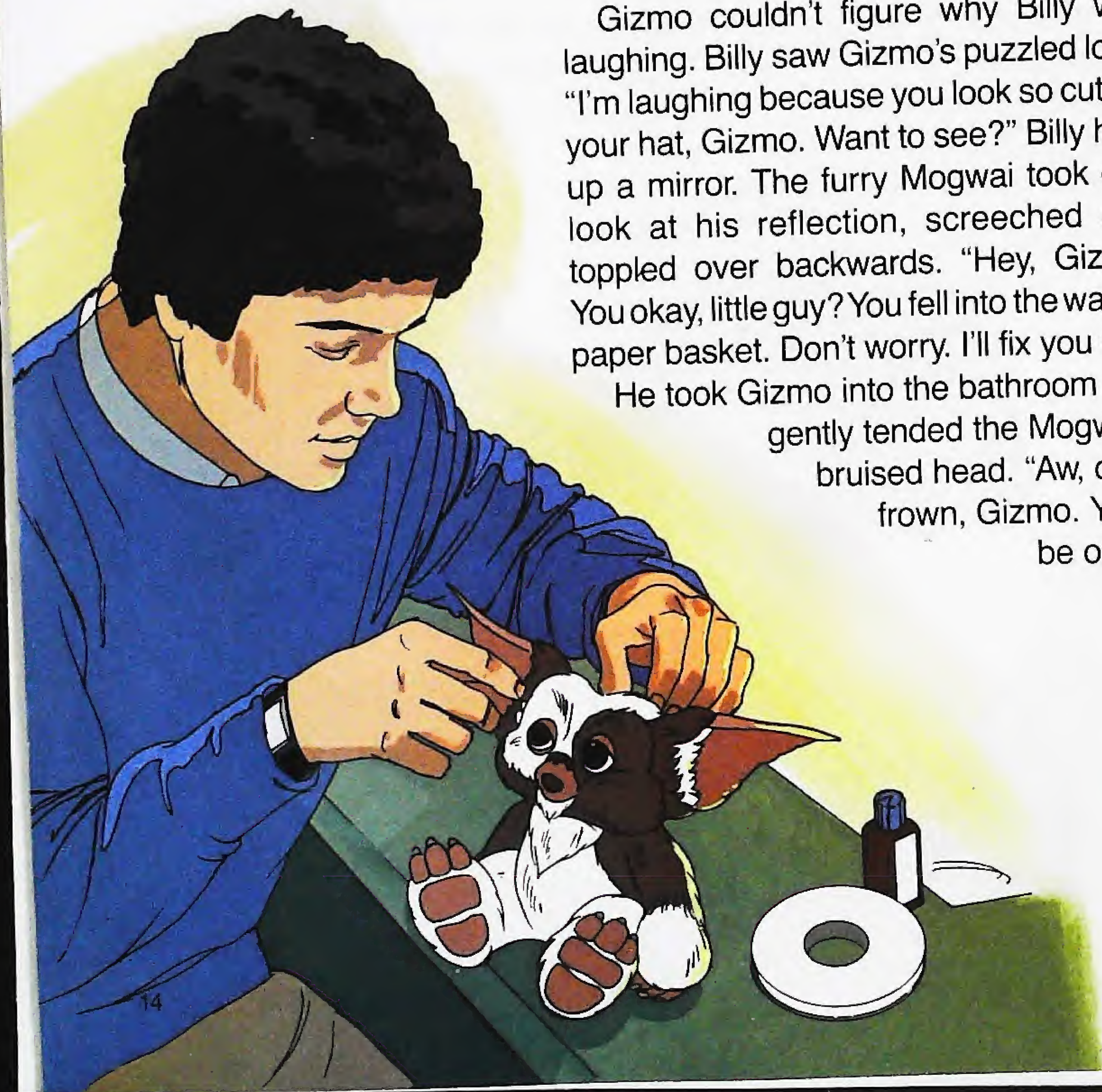
Billy cradled Gizmo in his arms. "Come on upstairs, little fella. I'll show you my room." He took him into the attic and set him on his desktop. "Oops, let me dim the lights for you. There, is that better?"

Gizmo smiled and sang a single, clear note. Billy turned on his portable keyboard and played the same note. Gizmo's large ears perked up, and then he sang *five* notes. Billy struggled with the keys. "I'm not quite getting it right, Giz."

Billy watched the little Mogwai lean over the keyboard and play the five correct notes. "Ha, ha—thanks, Gizmo." He placed a big, red Santa hat on the Mogwai's tiny head. "There. Can you say, 'Ho, ho, ho'?"







Gizmo couldn't figure why Billy was laughing. Billy saw Gizmo's puzzled look. "I'm laughing because you look so cute in your hat, Gizmo. Want to see?" Billy held up a mirror. The furry Mogwai took one look at his reflection, screeched and toppled over backwards. "Hey, Gizmo. You okay, little guy? You fell into the wastepaper basket. Don't worry. I'll fix you up."

He took Gizmo into the bathroom and gently tended the Mogwai's bruised head. "Aw, don't frown, Gizmo. You'll be okay."

Billy took Gizmo back to his room, propped him up in bed and tucked him in. "Doesn't that feel good? Here you go. Here's one of my 3-D comic books to look at." Gizmo held up the red and green glasses and peered at the comics happily while Billy began drawing at his desk.



Billy unwrapped a chocolate candy. Then he checked the clock. "Only 9:30—it's safe to feed you. Here, Gizmo." Billy's dog Barney watched the little Mogwai chew happily on the candy. He wandered over to the bed, sniffed at Gizmo and then gave him a friendly lick. Billy looked up from his work. "See, I knew you guys would be friends!"





When he finished the drawing, Billy signed his name. He pointed out the name to Gizmo and pointed to himself. "Billy. That's me. Bil-ly."

Gizmo tried to imitate him. Billy grinned. "That's good, Gizmo!"

Billy crawled into bed. "I'm really glad you like it here. Goodnight, Giz." Gizmo cooed and shut his eyes. The two friends fell fast asleep.





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